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August 6, 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Support Services Staff

SUBJECT : Interim Findings

FROM :

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This memorandum reports our findings to date in the two areas covered by our study: data processing personnel administration within DDS, and SIPS organization and planning. These findings are tentative and subject to change, but I am reasonably confident of them and believe you will be interested in an early report.

No actions are recommended in this memorandum; they will appear later after consideration of the alternatives. However, if these findings are accepted as valid certain actions will be implicitly suggested.

A. DDS Data Processing Personnel Administration

1. The data processing personnel in DDS, and others assigned to DDS systems, have lower grades than data processing personnel assigned to other work. the average grade of the IPB professional is 11.3. The average grade of MSD personnel assigned to SIPS is 11.9. The average grade of all other OCS professionals is 12.6. The Chief of MSD is a 15, while the Chiefs of all other OCS divisions are 16's.
2. The position descriptions for IPB professionals carry lower grades than those for comparable professionals in other directorates. We performed an analysis of position descriptions for "Computer Systems Analysts" throughout the Agency; a summary of their pertinent features appears in the appendix. We learned that:
 - a. The form, content and currency of position descriptions varies widely, making comparison difficult.

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- b. IPB itself appears inconsistent. An identical position description carries a 13 in one branch and a 12 in another.
 - c. The system analysts in IPB are authorized grades one or possibly two levels lower than their counterparts elsewhere, depending on interpretation.
3. IPB offers poor career potential. This has been unanimously reported to us as opinion, and is supported by two facts:
- a. The average professional in IPB has gone more than five years without a promotion. There have indeed been some recent promotions of more promising people and many of the veterans are regarded as unpromotable, but the fact remains.
 - b. Of seven Career Trainees assigned to IPB, only one remains. All the attrition has been for normal causes, but one feels that if IPB offered attractive potential fewer would have left.
4. Most of the professionals in IPB apparently have lower data processing skills than are called for in their position descriptions. Every level of System Analyst description calls for the incumbent to "develop conceptual systems" employing "radical departures from the existing system" or similar language. This presupposes a wide experience with the various ways in which computers can be employed. However, prior to assignment to their positions few of the incumbents had any experience beyond a programming course. This is not intended to be universally damning: talented individuals gain such experience on the job and some members of IPB are probably more competent than their experience indicates. However, the generalization appears valid.

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Conclusion

Faulty data processing personnel administration in DDS has precluded the development of a viable function, and will continue to do so unless changed. (exceptions are found among the Offices which have developed satisfactory internal data processing functions; this statement applies primarily to administration at the Directorate level.)

B. SIPS Organization and Planning

1. The nature of SIPS required DDS not only to provide an operating staff but also a professional staff capable of introducing a continuing series of evolutionary changes. It is not a single-purpose system designed to produce a specific group of outputs and stop there; it is an integrated multifunction system intended to provide a new kind of interactive service to users. Neither the users nor the SIPS team can envision the ideal specifications for this new kind of service; a series of evolutionary iterations must take place after the first version of SIPS is operational. This calls for a group of data processing professionals with multi-functional knowledge in full-time rapport with the users served by SIPS.
2. The SIPS design effort has been poorly managed. The design process seems to be proceeding fairly smoothly now (we will investigate this further) but it did not in the past: years were lost and much work was wasted for lack of an orderly management process. In great measure this was due to the unique nature of SIPS. Apparently it was the first multi-function system to be undertaken by the Agency, and all organizations experience similar difficulty in their early attempts to design such systems. The "user specifies - data processing executes" philosophy practiced very effectively by OCS has not worked with SIPS; it is to be hoped that the experience will be instructive.

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3. The intended SIPS task force organization has apparently never really been realized. It was intended that each functional area of SIPS was to be undertaken by an integrated team of DDS and OCS personnel working for a single manager, without organizational distinctions for the duration of the project. Apparently organizational distinctions remain; there is a "shadow organization" of DDS personnel separate from that of the OCS personnel within the project. We have been assured that this has not impeded progress; that the individuals are sufficiently motivated to work together adequately.

Conclusion

The SIPS organization and planning structure may be adequate now to accomplish reasonable progress, but remains imperfect and is surely not going to be adequate in the future.

The tone of this memorandum is entirely negative; the purpose is to establish the necessity of re-examining the fundamentals and considering some basic changes. We have also arrived at some positive findings, particularly about the people involved: they are universally candid and knowledgeable, and most appear competent and sincere in putting the Agency's interests first. The situation is far from hopeless, and we hope that with some changes of less than revolutionary nature it can be made very healthy.

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APPENDIX

Summary of Selected Computer System Analyst Position Descriptions

Position Number	Organization	Grade	
0013	FRS, IPB	12	Serves as project leader for feasibility studies.
0012	FRS, IPB	13	Senior analyst and technical specialist for FRS as well as project leader.
0008	MRS, IPB	12	Identical to position description for 0012, but one grade lower.
0452	ISD, OCS	13	"Serves as team leader approximately 20% of time."
2471	SG, DDP	12	No supervisory responsibility.
1959	CRS, DDI	12	No supervisory responsibility.
1358	AID, NPIC	14	No supervisory responsibility, but serves as technical advisor to Chief and on external committees.